

**John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley
National Heritage Corridor
Blackstone Valley Educators Network (BVEN)**

Connections to the Frameworks

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Framework Connections

While each state (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island) has its own version of curriculum frameworks or learning standards that teachers need to be constantly aware of (especially in “off-site” activities), the education staff from the various institutions of the Blackstone Valley Educators Network would be happy to discuss the numerous connections between the cultural institutions, their exhibits and programs, and the needs of teachers and administrators. By reviewing this brochure, we hope that you can visualize the potential connections of the Blackstone Valley’s institutions to the following curriculum frameworks:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ English Language Arts❑ History/Social Studies❑ Geography❑ Economics❑ Civics/Government/Workers Rights/Trade Union Movement❑ Immigration/Multi-Culturalism/Ethnic Diversity❑ Art/Architecture❑ Science/Biology: Ecological Impacts and the Environment❑ Science: Technology/Engineering | <p>Questioning, Listening, and Contributing... Oral Presentations... Vocabulary and Concept Development... Organizing Ideas in Writing... Research... Composition</p> <p>Factual knowledge of the central ideas, events, people, and works that have shaped our world.</p> <p>The concepts of location, place, human interaction with the environment, movement, and regions.</p> <p>Resources. The Nature of Business... Cycles... Movement... Investment and Policies</p> <p>Includes Advocacy for the Environment as a part of “Citizenship”</p> <p>Who Americans are and where they come from... Performing and Visual Arts/Architecture</p> <p>Ecology and the Environment... Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitats... Environmental Issues</p> <p>Designing, building, and using tools and machinery...</p> |
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English Language Arts

Being proficient in the English language is an important part of being a literate and functional citizen in the United States in the twenty-first century. The ability to think clearly; communicate effectively (in both written and oral presentations); analyze and organize information; research new ideas and concepts; and listen, question, and contribute to discussions is vital to one’s own personal and professional development, and the ability to obtain and expand employment opportunities.

Responding to journal prompts, reviewing exhibit text, performing in impromptu vignettes, preparing a script, researching additional information, keeping a logbook, or acting as a reporter in trying to prioritize information for an article are just a few of the ways students can practice the English language arts in conjunction with a visit to or by a cultural institution. Ask for ideas from the education staff!

History/Social Studies

As the *Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework* (Edition: October 22, 2002) says, “History as nothing more than facts and dates is simply barren chronicle, devoid of its larger significance — the great discoveries, conflicts, and ideas of the human past that have shaped who we are and what is happening today. The ironies and surprises of history, the great tragedies and achievements of human experience, cannot be captured through mindless or simple regurgitation of dates and names. To illuminate the drama of history requires an examination of the larger themes and ideas of history.” Think about almost any aspect of our current lives... how can we isolate any one topic from what’s happening around the world? Studying

history requires us to immerse ourselves in another time, place, and set of circumstances... to acquire new understandings and perspectives... and to challenge our previously-held points of view.

BVEN institutions that are dedicated to sharing how the American Industrial Revolution began, why it began in the Blackstone Valley, and how that affected the past, present and future of this region as well as our country (and to a lesser extent, the world), are focused on history.

Geography

The field of geography encompasses the distribution of natural resources, landscape features, and the ways in which humans adapt to and use these natural conditions; it involves both the natural and social sciences. Studying geography requires students to read and interpret maps (and realize why early industrialists recognized the potential water power of a river that dropped 438 feet over its 46 mile length!); recognize the connections between natural resources and human activities such as industrialization, mining, or agriculture; and see the links between the places where products are found/made and where they are consumed.

BVEN institutions that feature exhibits or programs on watersheds; why the Blackstone Canal (and later, the Worcester-Providence Railroad and/or Routes 122/146) was built; the relationships between making, transporting and selling products; and/or why certain products were favored in specific locations, are focusing on geography.

Economics

Economics is much more than “guns and butter,” although that quaint phrase may still have a place in introductory economics courses. To New England students, economics means examining (both in an historical as well as a current context): resources (natural, human, and financial); the nature of business (agriculture, commerce, industry); the reasons for the cycles of economic expansion and recession; trade and transportation; the rise and fall of various industries and trade-related transportation systems; regional economics; and the roles and influences of private and public investment and finance policies.

Economics is a central theme for many BVEN institutions, and the programs they have developed make many of the economic principles tangible. The entire mill culture was developed, sustained, and eventually lapsed due to economics. Why the Blackstone Canal was built, why it was replaced by the railroad, why towns and cities flourished or faded... all these occurrences were brought about by economics. The entire “farm to factory” transition was the result of economic changes in our country and the world.

Civics/Government/Workers Rights/Trade Union Movement

Here we are talking about the rights and responsibilities of people and their government – how the government (local and national) responds to the needs and the will of its citizens, and what people expect and/or demand from their elected officials. While our country was founded under the premise of “Liberty and Justice for All,” during the nineteenth century, the wealthy and well-connected mill owners frequently lived as though they had a “different” set of rights than did the poor and the disenfranchised, such as the mill workers.

However, by studying the foundation documents of our country and its state and local governments... by actively participating in the various forums open to citizens (voting, organizing, advocating for or against specific issues or points of view, and/or speaking out through letters to elected representatives, trade union representatives, and through the media)... and by fulfilling the responsibilities and exercising the rights that every citizen has, individuals did and do make a difference.

When you think about the industrial and social injustices that took place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (leading to the growth of the union movement)... when you ask yourself how immigrants, women, or children could have been so openly denied their basic human rights for so long – you have entered the realm of worker’s rights and the trade union movement. When you wonder how the Blackstone could become so polluted and ecologically “disturbed,” and you wonder why local or state governments didn’t more actively address the situation then (partly due to not understanding the concept of “ecology,” and partly because our society at that time thought in terms of “manifest destiny”) or now... you’ve entered the fields of civics and government.

Immigration/Multi-Culturalism/Ethnic Diversity

In many ways, the United States has been defined by its immigration policies and history. As a “salad bowl,” our country has a history of welcoming immigrants; unfortunately, it has also periodically rejected specific groups of immigrants as well, a fact not well known by most citizens. Nevertheless, immigrants have provided many of the strong backs, the inventive ideas and technologies, and have been the driving force for many of the new or improved products and services that have energized our country. In a sense, except for First Nations people, we (or our ancestors) are/were all immigrants.

When a BVEN institution chooses to feature displays, programs, or tours around the subject of who were the workers of the Blackstone Valley, they are talking about immigrants. Discover the story of immigration in the Blackstone region through the cultural celebrations, the churches, the languages and accents, the foods eaten and dances danced, and the last names of the people who live today in the Blackstone Valley.

Art/Architecture

On first thought, it may seem a little far-fetched to think of a connection between the Blackstone River and the performing and visual arts, but think again! Because of its rich history of immigration from all over Europe and the world, there are many festivals celebrating the music, dance, and theatre of many lands held in the Valley each year. Tasty foods, traditional clothing, languages from many lands all emerge in an atmosphere of pride and sharing!

The visual arts and architecture are also found in the Valley, thanks to the influences of wealthy mill owners who once lived here, the many immigrants that came here, or knowledgeable and dedicated enthusiasts who still live here in the Blackstone Valley! The “visual arts” include (at least according to the 1999 Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework) such endeavors as: drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, industrial and graphic design, architecture, landscape design, and urban and regional planning!

Science/Biology: Ecological Impacts and the Environment

Virtually every human action has an environmental impact. People of the First Nations used to burn the forest underbrush so as to make hunting easier and life less dangerous, and they cleared sections of land for agriculture. When beavers build a dam and create a beaver pond, they change a stream ecosystem into a pond ecosystem. Still, it was the unprecedented influx of European colonists/settlers and their tendency to feel as though they had the right to “have dominion” over the environment that really began to generate a series of impacts that natural processes could not remediate. As mills and mill towns grew in size and significance, soils became contaminated and waters polluted... the natural flow of water was restrained, stopped, and/or redirected... biological communities were severely disturbed or destroyed... and species of wildlife became threatened, endangered, or in some cases, extinct.

Dams, canals, sluiceways... waste dumping, flooding, burying... improper storage, changing water levels... environmental remediation, waste treatment, restoring water flow – all these topics (and more!) are featured in the programming offered by several BVEN institutions.

Science: Technology/Engineering

The relationship between science and technology/engineering is often not well understood. Science is frequently divided into what are referred to as the natural sciences versus the physical sciences. On the other hand, technology/engineering is a part of both the natural and physical sciences. Technology refers to the tools that scientists use to study objects, organisms, and natural phenomena. Engineering is the design process by which technological instruments and devices are made. Thinking and designing a tool is engineering; building and using a tool is technology.

Almost all BVEN institutions address technology/engineering in some respect. The dams, sluiceways, water wheels, spinning machines, wire-drawing devices, mill clocks, weaving looms, and even how a town was “laid out” are all examples of technology/engineering!.

***As you can clearly see, we do indeed have something of value to offer you and your students.
Call us today for details – we're waiting!***

*Hundreds of school classes from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut visit the National Park Service and U. S. Army Corps of Engineers interpretive centers, DEM/state parks, museums, cultural institutions, historical sites, and nature/science interpretive centers of the Blackstone River Valley each year. In this era of education reform, all significant educational activities must be connected to one or more learning standards of their individual state's curriculum frameworks. Here in the Blackstone Valley, from Worcester to Providence, the institutions of the **John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor** have banded together to make sure that the majority of their programs and exhibits are directly connected to the various curriculum frameworks of the southern New England states (Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut).*

Because all curriculum frameworks undergo periodic revisions, the BVEN institutions would like to share the themes which are featured in their programs and exhibits. If you see a subject area that you would like presented during your visit to the Blackstone Valley, please speak with the education coordinator or visitor services representative at that institution.